

Submission
No 264

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

I had vaginal birth with my first baby. I was already experiencing pre-labour symptoms when I agreed to have a sweep around 41 weeks. At 9 days "overdue" I had a check up at [redacted] and the midwife at [redacted] said I was progressing well as I was experiencing lots of pre-labour contractions. After a routine scan, there was concern that the amniotic fluid had decreased and the baby appeared to be small. I was induced with oxytocin quickly progressing my labour. It was relatively smooth, despite intense back pain. My baby weighed a healthy 3kgs.

My second baby 41 and 3 days I had no symptoms of pre-labour whatsoever. I was confident and looking forward to my 2nd natural birth - I felt my body was capable and stronger.

During my routined visit with the midwife at [redacted] birth Center I was offered early induction such a sweep - I declined. I didn't have any signs yet (like I did the time before prior to getting the sweep).

I was pressured to start planning my induction plan and she suggested for the induction to take place no later than 12 days over - cervix gel, followed my breaking my waters. I felt pressured, I felt I didn't have a choice. The safety of my baby - possibilities of stillbirth - was mentioned by the midwife. I reluctantly agreed desperately hoping I would go into labour naturally by then.

12 days over my "due date" I still had no symptoms. I went into [redacted] for another checkup - the cervix gel was applied as I had zero dilation. I stayed overnight and I was told in the morning the doctor would come early to break my waters. Every fibre in my body wanted to leave the hospital. I felt so pressured, and deflated - I knew deep down in my mind and body that my baby was not ready. Again, the guilt of possibly still birth was instilled by the medical team.

The morning after I had only dilated 1cm -

Only just enough to break my waters. As soon as the doctor broke my water the babies heartbeat became irregular (prior to this baby was fine). I had to be monitored as a result and the rest of my labour was a nightmare. Midwife offered oxytocin, however I declined saying I'm happy to walk around the ward and try to bring on the labour myself - she rolled her eyes at me. My contractions were slow to progress as I didn't feel safe in the hospital room. When I labourer in the bathroom lights of no noises, my contraction became closer and regular. However as soon as the medical seem came in to inspect me my contractions stopped - I felt so uncomfortable and judged in their presence. They also wanted to figure out why the babies heart fast and tried to take a blood sample. They tried to take a blood sample twice by inserting a large piece of equipment into my vagina - I have never experienced pain so excruciating (the gel on the cervix previously contributed to the sensitivity), it was worse that the contractions itself - it almost felt like rape. I didn't want it to happen but they insisted it was for the babies safety - to understand why the babies heart rate had increased. It was obvious to me that it was due to being prematurely induced - my body and baby were not ready.

I was eventually called to have an emergency c-section. I felt so deflated, exhausted and so utterly defeated - I wanted my baby out. Deep down I knew had I listened to my own body and my own instincts I would have been able to deliver my baby naturally, as I did with my first.

My mother was a late carrier, my younger sister was born at 42 weeks with barely any pressure to induction - mum was given cervix gel at 42 weeks and that was it.

The medical system needs to stop pressuring and undermining birthing people. The idea of due dates are so outdated and does not accommodate for women who carry later than the majority. The statistics show that the later you carry the more likely you'll experience some kind of induction. An induced labour is more likely to result in further birthing interventions.